

THE LENINIST



**Britain's defeat
will be our
victory**

**Support the IFM Troops Out March. August 6, 1.00pm, Islington
Town Hall (rear), Upper Street, London N1**



Fortnightly paper of the Leninists:
for a genuine Communist Party

ON AUGUST 20 1968 the armed forces of the Soviet Union and its closest allies entered Czech territory against the will of its people and government. There can be no doubt that this was a watershed event in the life of Czechoslovakia and the world communist movement. The passage of time does not lessen the importance of what happened.

The reasons given by the Soviet Union for the intervention were pure invention. Certainly, neither the stories of a West German invasion and the presence of large numbers of Green Berets disguised as US tourists, nor the suggestion that social democrats were plotting an uprising convinced the Czech population, many of whom supported Dubcek because they incorrectly thought he would introduce socialist democracy.

Nonetheless, some genuine communists under the influence of Soviet centrism – among whom we would include ourselves – felt that proletarian internationalism demanded *uncritical* support for the Soviet intervention. We are not afraid to say we were wrong.

The intervention was *contradictory*. It stopped in its tracks the *glasnost* and *perestroika*-like reforms of Alexander Dubcek and Ota Sik, true. That these measures, which pointed in the direction of market socialism and strengthened the forces of capitalist restoration, were scuppered was good. The methods were not.

The Soviet Union acted with great national chauvinistic arrogance. Dubcek was beaten by tanks not polemic. He was taken to Moscow in chains, the rights of Czechoslovakia were trampled under foot. This was not 'proletarian internationalism'. No wonder it was not only the imperialists and what became Eurocommunism and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia which denounced the Soviet action, but the parties of Yugoslavia, Romania, Albania and China – they feared the same fate.

Undoubtedly, Dubcek's 'socialism with a human face' was a product of the failure of bureaucratic socialism. Nevertheless it was also a mask behind which was the hidden agenda of taking Czechoslovakia out of the Soviet bloc and down the Yugoslav road.

The chances were that this would have led to the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and a shift in the balance of forces in Eastern Europe in favour of imperialism. This could but only put the Soviet Union, the world's revolutionary centre, in danger. Genuine communists had to take sides.

The fact that the Czech working class was operating not as a class for itself, but merely as a passive class in itself, meant that there was no immediate possibility of Czechoslovakia going beyond bureaucratic socialism.

Trotskyites and hopeless leftists imagine that the working class spontaneously, ie without the highest level of organisation, can fight for communism. This is petty bourgeois nonsense, as is the suggestion that the workers were just about to stage a political revolution in Czechoslovakia. This is to misread events and to fatally underestimate the role of consciousness in true working class politics.

What was posed in 1968 was defending existing bureaucratic socialism or the Dubcek capitalist road. For genuine communists the interests of the world revolution demanded the former and we must have the courage to say that, faced with such a choice, Czech and Slovak national rights had to take second place.

Leninists have no fear of self-criticism. For us it is healthy, truly for us there are no closed chapters in history. The same cannot be said of 'official' communism. We doubt very much that the *Morning Star* and its CPB supporters club, let alone the NCP, will even mark the Czech events. We predict with some confidence that until the Soviet Union speaks, the dummies will remain mute ... what a fitting epitaph for 'official' communism.

The Editor

LETTERS

Democratic Union

On the question of the 'Democratic Union', I did not mean to imply that the *existence* of the 'DU' is somehow a product or contingent upon present conditions in the USSR, as if these conditions had brought into being a new phenomenon. We agree, I think, that there is nothing new about the 'DU': its politics are bourgeois democratic and its economics capitalist. In short it is counterrevolutionary.

What I meant to say, is that these conditions presented the 'DU' with an opportunity to publicise its aims and attempt to create an open political organisation.

It was probably a mistake to give undue weight to the 'DU', to *Pamyat* and the bourgeois nationalists in, for example, the Baltic Republics or the Ukraine. These are all organisations or forces of openly counterrevolutionary character. They oppose the democratic system of the proletarian state and have no right to exist.

The editorial in *The Leninist* addressed this question but was confusing. You cannot ban forces. You can only limit their effectiveness to a greater or lesser extent, depending on methods. I am not suggesting that the pitiful adherents of the 'DU' should be shot or sent to the camps. But I do not see the point of allowing them to constitute themselves as a party or giving them access to Soviet as well as western media to propagate counterrevolution.

To do this would in principle be to concede that forces openly inimical to socialism have a *right* to participate in political life, to seek support among the people as legitimate representatives of an 'alternative' point of view.

What on earth is the purpose of "devastating debates ... on TV before a statistically representative studio audience"? We don't invite robbers into our homes to discuss the pros and cons of private property. We work to build a society in which it is acknowledged that robbery is anti-social, that it merits and will receive punishment.

M G Malkin
Surrey

World Centre

I genuinely look forward to getting my copy of *The Leninist*. I usually find the articles very informative and often get good information about the SWP whose sister organisation, the SWM, you always have to confront on the left in Ireland.

That is not to say I don't have reservations about some of your politics. For example, you hold the USSR to be the centre of the world revolution and yet you are so critical of it. This seems to me to be a contradiction, even though the criticisms are often well deserved.

Also, is it possible to reforge an organisation, like the CPGB, that has gone completely off the rails, if I understand what you are trying to do correctly. Does it not smack slightly of *Militant* in the Labour Party?

The situation also in regard to Sinn Fein: while you clearly state their reformist politics and understand them, in my opinion you over estimate their revolutionary potential. They're past master at

being all things to all people.
Jim Flynn
Co Waterford, Ireland

David Sherriff replies:
We stand by the Marxist-Leninist understanding of the world's revolutionary centre. It is an objective phenomenon, which has nothing to do with worshipping this or that leadership in the USSR. The world's revolutionary centre – that country where the class struggle has reached its highest expression – has shifted over the years. In the 1830s it was in the Britain of the Chartists, later it moved to France where we saw the world's first workers' state in the form of the Paris Commune in 1871, from France the world revolutionary centre moved to Germany and then with the 1905 revolution to Russia. So criticism of the revisionist Gorbachev is not in contradiction with recognising the objective fact that in the USSR the world revolution finds its highest expression. As to the CPGB it is vital to understand that it, unlike the Labour Party, has its origins as a revolutionary party, it is the CPGB of 1920, the CPGB of Lenin's Comintern that we fight to reforge, not the miserable rump that calls itself the CPGB today. Finally, on Sinn Fein, we consider it a *petty bourgeois* revolutionary organisation, this accounts for its vacillations. We do not overestimate its revolutionary potential.

Prisoners Aid

The inaugural meeting of the Republican Socialist Prisoners Aid, hosted by London IRSP, was held on July 2 in north London.

Republican Socialist Prisoners Aid is an organisation which has been formed in order to provide financial, political and moral support for our prisoners. The need for RSPA arose after the Green Cross organisation withdrew assistance from 47 republican socialist prisoners.

The meeting was attended by IRSP supporters from the Irish community and representatives of Internationalist Faction, Irish Prisoners Appeal, Red Action, Revolutionary Internationalist League, Revolutionary Communist Group, Revolutionary Communist League and *The Leninist*.

Eamonn Mullen of Belfast IRSP addressed the meeting outlining the development of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, the formal adoption of the principles of Marxism-Leninism in 1984 and the subsequent attacks on the IRSP in 1987. He also spoke of the future direction of the IRSP and the need for a revolutionary communist party to be developed in Ireland in order to defeat British imperialism in all its manifestations and establish a Thirty-two County socialist republic.

Questions of organisational structure were raised and it was stated by the IRSP that as RSPA was an IRSP initiative it was only natural that the political direction of RSPA would be directed by the IRSP. It was agreed that organisations and individuals should be encouraged to affiliate to RSPA and actively campaign for financial support for RSPA.

A temporary committee was formed to manage the publicity and organisation of the next meeting of RSPA where it is to be hoped that all organisations and individuals from England, Scotland and Wales who wish to affi-

iate and contribute to the development of RSPA will attend. A central committee will be formed whose role will be to co-ordinate the activities of regional branches of RSPA and establish prisoner support groups.

Prisoners support groups, individuals and organisations who already sponsor prisoners will continue to send their sponsorship money direct to the Prisoners Welfare Officer in Belfast but any money in excess of this amount should be sent to the central fund.

The sponsorship scheme provides individual prisoners with basic food parcels which they are entitled to. The money raised by RSPA will be used to provide clothing, reading material, travelling expenses for the families and relatives of the prisoners and other occasional entitlements the prisoners are allowed. We would also stress that people should write to our prisoners as outside contact helps to raise the morale of our incarcerated comrades.

RSPA also provides anti-imperialists and socialists in this country with an opportunity to express their internationalist solidarity with Irish POWs. Any person or organisation who describes themselves as socialist must by definition support the struggle for national liberation and socialism. The selfless sacrifice of our prisoners deserves your support. It is hoped that you agree.

Is Mise
J O'Brien
London

Oustanding

I was rather disappointed to read in the *Morning Star* recently that Jack Dash has decided to join the CPB, giving his reason for doing so; "if its good enough for Prof Rothstein to be in, it's good enough for me."

Number 66 is certainly one of the best issues of the paper. The two outer pages and the editorial were outstanding. On reading the South African and Soviet reports one can only wonder how deep the rot has developed in the Soviet Union.

Bob Owen
South Yorkshire

Worrying

Your analysis of the 19th Conference of the CPSU is indeed very worrying, considering the great hopes we have in the USSR. Also their policies in Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Angola etc, are most depressing.

I am glad to see you are stressing the vital need of education in Marxism-Leninism which helps to get the correct picture of events and plot the way forward. I went through it all in the 1940s and am still learning, but the old brain is slower and more tired now.

Keep up the good work.
Tom Lord
Durham

Note: Letters have been shortened due to lack of space. For political security we have changed certain names, addresses and details.

WRITE OR RING

If you would like to reply to any of these letters, raise questions or comment on articles in *The Leninist* please write to The Editor, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX. Or phone us on 01-431 3135.

Slack to take in ...



From Ireland, a token of solidarity with our Summer Offensive. Tickets are £2 each for its raffle.

AS THESE lines are written, we are approaching the end of *The Leninist's* Fifth Summer Offensive. Nearly 86% of the total pledges have been raised and the momentum of the campaign is beginning to pick up, as it always does, as we near our July 31 deadline. Looking back over this year's Offensive, and taking into account the fact that it has stretched us more than any other in terms of minimum targets and the numbers of participants, it has become increasingly clear to us that the Summer Offensive, like our organisation in general, is still very much in its infancy.

Readers will know, we start each Summer Offensive with minimum targets from each participant. This year, these minimum targets have presented few problems to our people: the comrade to complete their quota first did so in roughly 70% of the time available. Similarly, the comrade with the highest personal target (at twice the minimum set), is poised at 91% to smash through and go beyond even this impressive personal achievement.

In the last issue of *The Leninist* (July 15), we looked at some of the comparative statistics of our fund-raising efforts and that of the Euro Communist Party of Great Britain rump. Some of the figures were truly remarkable. For example, as we reported in that issue, five of the CPGB's 19 districts started out with a final target for their two month money campaign less than the amount we raised in the first 24 hours of our Summer Offensive.

Because we set high standards for our comrades, because we demand what is necessary from individuals in order to build a mass, revolutionary Communist Party in Britain today, we get qualitatively higher levels of commitment from Leninist partisans than any other section of the communist movement in Britain today.

Even those comrades who for the moment shy away from throwing themselves wholeheartedly into Leninist work are imbued with that type of serious approach. Thus, we are proud to note, that all those Leninist sympathisers who are taking part only in a limited way in the

Fifth Offensive, are as individuals raising more than three whole districts of the CPGB.

This year's Offensive will have a far less 'untidy' finish than in previous years. The money making schemes and projects that comrades have thrown themselves into have been far more intensive and lucrative than in previous years and have enabled us to raise our targets in a far more condensed and 'efficient' way.

This has been a two way process: veterans of the four previous Summer Offensives have been able to impart to newer comrades the serious techniques necessary to squeeze blood from stones, while these more inexperienced comrades themselves have been able to bring to our campaign new ideas, new approaches, new contacts.

Despite this, the most important criticism to be made of the Offensive is its failure to involve sufficient numbers of readers and also its geographical lopsidedness. The closer you get to the centre of *The Leninist's* organisation in London, the higher the levels of activity and commitment for the campaign you encounter. This feature reflects a general problem in our organisation and is not because comrades outside London are somehow of inferior 'quality'. The lesson that the 'patchiness' of our Summer Offensive this year illustrates is that *The Leninist*, through its sympathisers and supporters, must spread its organisation nationally and thus generalise the levels of activity and commitment that we are able to achieve in and around our centre.

This year it is true that a few readers have responded to our call to up their contribution to our monthly fund for the paper, but most have passively sat back. There is a big political problem here. Our readers' - as opposed to organised sympathisers - donations to the campaign this year have amounted so far to under 1% of the total raised (and over half of this has actually come from readers abroad rather than in this country!).

We must be self critical here. While there can be no doubt that politics in Britain remain very

backward in world terms, we should be getting a much more enthusiastic response from our readers. Attempts have been made to draw them in through regular coverage of the progress of the Offensive, nonetheless the results have been very poor. This underlines the 'lopsidedness' of the development of our Summer Offensive. It is a problem we can and must struggle to overcome in the Summer Offensives to come.

Of the comrades who are taking a full part in the Fifth Summer Offensive, the average participant has raised over 40% of their targets by personal 'belt-tightening'. The remaining 60% or so has been gathered in from 'outside sources'. This is a much better proportion than in previous years and reflects the fact that comrades closer to the organisation have over the recent period been encouraged to 'turn outwards' - to start to systematically spread the ideas and influence of *The Leninist*.

This is an exciting development. The variety of methods that our comrades have used to raise their money reflects this process:

- We have had barbecues and socials involving large numbers of friends and contacts.
- This year, we have seen a number of comrades 'get on their bikes' in sponsored bike rides for the organisation and in the process raise hundreds of pounds for our campaign.
- Thousands of pounds have been raised by badge sales.
- Comrades have taken second jobs.
- Comrades have run stalls (which have taken them to all sorts of strange places including a three day religious festival).

There have, of course, been problems with all these types of activities. A miserable summer has hampered us and many of the activities would have benefitted from being planned in a more detailed way. Nevertheless, they reflect the process of our organisation turning outwards.

The annual Summer Offensive of *The Leninist* has started to develop traditions and roots as an organisational/political feature of our work. We are particularly pleased that Irish POWs have donated works of art to our fund drive and that we have received donations from revolutionaries in other countries, including Turkey, Iran and France.

This development is indicative of the fact that the Offensive is not simply some artificial grafting onto our general political practice; it is an organic product of our approach to building a Communist Party in Britain today, an approach that finds a resonance with advanced militants and revolutionaries from a variety of different backgrounds.

In spite of the fact that our development is still 'lopsided', we are justly proud of our Summer Offensive.

Nevertheless, we realise that there is still a good deal of 'slack' to be taken in and many more people could have been involved this year.

The Summer Offensive reveals the strengths and weaknesses of our organisation. Again this year, the problems that have manifested themselves have been problems of growth.

Victory to the Fifth Summer Offensive of *The Leninist*!
Forward to the Sixth!

Ian Mahoney

The EETPU's vote of 128,400 votes to 25,680 on the change in its rules, giving it, formally, greater independence from TUC authority, more or less seals its departure from the TUC. It would be a mistake to hold up the TUC loyal unions as examples of class consciousness against the EETPU, as many of them are offering not dissimilar one union deals to the sweetheart deals of Eric Hammond. Militants should demand that the EETPU be expelled, not out of any illusion in the fighting capacity of the remaining trade union leaders, but to engender a fight for control and against compromise by the militant rank and file. This does not mean, as argued by the *Flashlight* group within the EETPU, that militants should drop out of the union into various TUC affiliated unions. Such a strategy must have Hammond laughing up his sleeve. The best way to fight EETPU scab unionism and any attempt to set up an alternative, scab, centre is to fight it from *within*, to take control through a militant fightback, rather than to give Hammond an easy time by handing him not only the union machine (which he has), but unchallenged access to the rank and file. Communists should stand, not for sickening and fruitless inter-union piracy, but for a revolutionary fight within whatever union they find themselves in.

The recent pay award to the nurses was a sop, and a divisive one at that. As expected, the higher grades are getting a bigger slice than lower grades, with student nurses getting very little indeed. This will exacerbate divisions within the health industry, especially when one considers that ancillary staff are not included in the award. To add fuel to this fire of discontent, it is down to individual hospital managers to dole out the cash, and many are grading down nurses at lower levels to make the meagre cash stretch. The Tories have fought their class war with great cunning, as well as resolution, here. They have increased the divisions within an already very fragmentary health industry, between different grades of nurses, and nurses and ancillary staff. Workers in the health industry must take cognisance of this and act. The present period should not be viewed as an end to the dispute, merely as a lull. The cuts will get worse as will the relative pay of health workers.



• Health workers must unite in struggle. The government has cleverly deepened divisions, militants must fight for unity - one health industry, one health workers union

The decision of the courts to continue to withhold the National Union of Seamen's funds for a further 21 days, conditional on the leadership's good behaviour in abandoning the P&O strikers, has rightly provoked an outburst against the union's bureaucracy which has assured the judge of its all too willing cooperation. No seafarer can now have the slightest illusion in the militant posturing of Sam McCluskie. But the fact is that McCluskie may not have been liked or trusted by the strikers, but his 'left' blustering at various times in the strike was enough to ensure that the leadership of the strike stayed within the hands of the bureaucracy. It is quite clear that this led to the betrayal of the strike. This self-seeking crew have clearly shown that all they see a union as is to provide them with their fat salaries, expense accounts and union cars. Another Wapping is on the cards, resulting from the absence of any alternative leadership. Clearly, supporters of *Militant*, much in evidence among the strikers, were unable and unwilling to seize the reins. But a genuinely militant, revolutionary lead was needed from the first through organisations independent from the bureaucrats, such as nationally linked strike committees. Until rank and file trade unionists learn and apply these lessons, Wapping-type defeats will continue to happen.

Rush, rush, rush



Our £600 monthly fund has not been doing well over recent months, it has been doing badly. In June we were badly down and the same goes for July. So far this month it stands at a mere £369. We would like to sincerely thank those readers who have rallied to the support of their paper. In particular we are pleased that we have received the equivalent of £50 from a reader in France. Unfortunately unlike him too many of our readers take *The Leninist* for granted. This is a mistake which reflects the present state of retreat and confusion in the workers' movement. There is a long list of left papers that have folded due to lack of finance under such circumstances. Our paper will swim against the stream of demoralisation and confusion which leaves so many passive today. We will ensure that *The Leninist* goes from strength to strength. It is Britain's *Iskra*, the vital prerequisite for building a genuine Communist Party - without which a socialist revolution will remain an impossible dream.

Troops out ... when?

ON JUNE 30 the 'Charter for Withdrawal', otherwise known as 'Time To Go!', was launched by a collection of celebrities, labour movement figures and bodies within the Labour Party, in the run up to the twentieth anniversary of this round of the Irish war, ie when British troops appeared yet again on Irish streets in August 1969.

The charter has the support of the *Irish Post* (very influential in the Irish community in Britain) and individuals as varied as those fading stars of the sixties left, Tariq Ali and Paul Foot, along with loyal servants of the crown, like *Mirror* Group Political Editor, Joe Haines. At the hub of this odd assortment sits the Labour Committee on Ireland, whose brainchild this essentially is.

The same tired old rehash of liberalism, and arguments as to why it's good for Britain to get out of Ireland, that we have seen not only from the Labour left but also from the CPGB of the seventies, in the guise of its pro-imperialist Bill of Rights, is offered up. It is hardly surprising, then, that the pro-imperialist rumps that are the CPGB and CPB should trail along behind this latest 'solution' to the Irish crisis.

The charter implicitly rejects the two basic demands that those who call themselves communists or socialists, or even democrats should regard as the bottom line for solidarity work with Ireland's struggle: 'Troops Out Now!' and 'Self determination for the Irish people as a whole'. No principled basis is laid for campaigning for Irish freedom, in the interests of collecting as 'broad' a platform as possible. When and how Britain should withdraw is left unsaid. The only criterion of support for this charter seems to be an acceptance that it should do so, and in the not too distant future.

The entire charter is, if we are to be kind, one entire misconception. It seeks to avoid the whole question of the war in the occupied Six Counties, while trying somehow to tap the passive war weariness of the British people; how, god only knows. It is all very well to quote opinion polls from the bourgeois press showing a majority of 'pollees' favouring some kind of a withdrawal: this sentiment is one which also encompasses an acceptance of British national interest (ie, the interests of imperialism), and could undoubtedly go hand in hand with support for legalising the death penalty for IRA/Inla Volunteers, or even the 'nuking' of west Belfast.

Attempts to rouse support for withdrawal – even in the woolly liberal way in which the charter presents it – are doomed to failure so long as the imperialist rational is accepted by the British working class. What impact did the similar Bill of Rights make; or for that matter, *mutatis mutandis*, the Better Life For All Campaign, International Tribunal on the British Presence in Ireland, or the similar 'Time to Go!' commemoration ten years ago supported by the Young Liberals? None whatsoever.

Taxpayers' money

Unfortunately, this imperialist rational, this concern for British national interests is not just accepted by the vast majority of British

workers, it is also a presupposition of 'Time To Go!', which goes to great pains to argue that withdrawal will not harm Britain (ie British imperialism).

"Twenty wasted years" says the charter. But wasted for whom? Our assorted 'lefts' behind the charter proceed to act as good little accountants for British imperialism: 'It's a waste of taxpayers' money!', they cry. Our national resources are being squandered, bleats the charter; "Resources which could be invested in a new future instead of on a military strategy which even the generals admit cannot succeed."

Senseless, isn't it? The oldest, most experienced and skilful ruling class on the face of the planet is throwing good money after bad into this silly little war it has got embroiled in, in its oldest colony. Why doesn't it just pack its bags and spend the money on something more sensible like kidney machines, steel plants or the like? Ah, if only we were in power ...

To take the charter's argument as good coin here, we would have to believe that the British bourgeoisie has the political subtlety of Genghis Khan and the economic acumen of an innumerate.

We do not, however, equate the interests of the working class with those of the British imperialist state. Because we do not fall into this opportunist trap we are able to look at the balance sheet of Britain's war in Ireland and not only ask why it should 'waste' its resources so, but give an answer.

Frankly, if the British ruling class were as cack-handed in its affairs as the charter intimates, it would not be in power now. The fact that it is owes not a little to its ability to ensure that the British army boot lies firmly planted in the soil of the Six Counties of the north of Ireland.

As the *Times* editorial put it in July 2 1981; "The Ulster question goes right to the heart of allegiance and national identity. That is the root issue of political society prior to and surpassing in importance all other issues." Ireland is, for British imperialism, not just some other colony, it is part of the British state. If the Six Counties were lost it would unleash all sorts of dangerous and possibly revolutionary developments.

From the perspective of the British bourgeoisie then, money spent on the Irish war is money very well spent indeed. Cheap at the price, in fact. In any argument about what's best for Britain, and the best way to use 'our' resources, imperialism will win out against the 'socialist' patriots of the Labour Committee on Ireland and their like, quite simply because the imperialists are right.

Our starting point cannot be one of vying with Thatcher and Co as to what is best for Britain. Frankly, we don't give a damn. It is only by challenging British workers' identification with British imperialism that any effective solidarity can be built with the liberation struggle in Ireland. Slogans such as 'Time To Go!' or 'Time to end the Irish war' (recently advanced by the Revolutionary Communist Party/Irish Freedom Movement) are a cowardly retreat from any such challenge.

By attempting to be better defenders of capitalism than the capitalists, all that such campaigns as the charter achieve is to consti-

tute the conscience of the liberal bourgeoisie, with a completely ineffectual result on the real allies of Irish freedom, the British working class.

The 'blood bath' theory

The fact is that the dominant figures within 'Time To Go!', like Clare Short MP and Peter Hain, both editorial advisors to the LCI journal *Labour and Ireland*, do not support the demand 'Troops Out Now!'. In fact, they are actively hostile to this slogan, the bottom line for Irish solidarity.

Many argue that to withdraw immediately would end in a 'blood bath', with Protestant and Catholic merrily getting on with the business of tearing each other's throats out once the restraining hand of John Bull is gone, after the fashion of a *Daily Mail* cartoon.

Hain, in *Labour and Ireland* October/November 1980 argued a 'left' version of this offensively chauvinist position:

"However much I sympathise with the call for immediate withdrawal ... the fact is that it is pointless and counterproductive to press it within the labour movement at present.

"It does not respond to deep seated fears of a blood bath ... It does not respond to the charge that a British Labour government would be 'washing its hands' of the crisis, displaying 'cowardice', etc. The 'immediate withdrawal' demand also verges on being meaningless when looked at in the practical context of a Labour government coming to power with existing legal, constitutional responsibilities and obligations."

Though written eight years ago, this is still Hain and the LCI's view. Well, I think we can safely dismiss the prospect of the mythical 'next labour government' doing anything that goes beyond its "legal, constitutional responsibilities and obligations" to British imperialism. The LCI is therefore left with the impotent 'parliamentary cretinist' plea that a withdrawal in the lifetime of one parliament would be in Britain's interests.

As to the red herring of a British government "washing its hands of the crisis", chance would be a fine thing. British imperialism and its governmental representatives – of whatever party – are the cause of the crisis. Like a pack of Lady Macbeths, they have more blood on their hands than can ever be washed out.

No British government can play any progressive role in Ireland whatsoever. British imperialism is not some precocious child that can be made to clear up its mess before being packed off to bed; it is a malevolent, rabid animal that must be slain – and slain as soon as possible.

The fact that Hain and his supporters see parliament as the vehicle for withdrawal and parliamentary procedure and imperialist legality as a block to this which must be politely negotiated indicates the total bankruptcy of this approach. Ireland would be waiting for ever for freedom if it was relying on this approach. Fortunate indeed, then, that the nationalist people of the Six Counties do not concern themselves overmuch with parliamentary niceties, as the heroic nineteen-year armed struggle against the might of the British state proves.

British bourgeois pundits are well aware of what *immediate* troops out would mean, and it is not a blood bath: "The instant withdrawal of British troops ... would plunge the whole of Ireland into anarchy on a scale hitherto unimagined ... Even if traditional strategy is out of date, British security is hardly compatible with the existence of a Cuba a few miles from her western shores. Any notion that the vacuum created by the withdrawal of United Kingdom troops would be promptly and smoothly filled by a successful invasion of the North by the Irish Republic and, as a result, the establishment throughout Ireland of a peaceful, if rather inefficient and corrupt bourgeois state, is absurd." (TE Utley, *Lessons of Ulster*, p134).

What Mr Utley and his class fear is exactly what we should be fighting for, tooth and nail. Unfortunately, Hain and Co seem to fear this as much as Utley, though Utley at least has the merit of honesty.

Objectively, any platform which does not demand the *immediate* and *unconditional* withdrawal of British troops from Ireland plays into the hands of British imperialism by giving it a progressive role. Imperialism has no progressive content, and any British 'anti-imperialist' who fights shy of the demand for troops out now, in theory and practice, is fated to end up in the arms of British imperialism.

The TOM alternative

The Troops Out Movement, the longest established 'solidarity movement' in Britain, withdrew from the mobilising committee for the charter because "we believe that the core to the coming year must be to win broad based support for British withdrawal centred around our two demands [ie, 'troops out now' and 'self determination for the Irish people as a whole' – AM] The great debate planned by the National Committee [of the charter] intends to look at the economic, legal and political implications of withdrawal thus moving the campaign in a different direction." (*Troops Out*, July 1988).

Quite right, but what alternative does TOM pose? Precious little. The quoted article is mainly concerned with promoting events initiated by the campaign which it has just pulled out from! In fact, it says, it will be building for the final demonstration and carnival on August 12 1989. In what way? Under its own slogans? How? It does not say. So, though opposing it in theory, TOM will do the donkey work for the final 'carnival of reaction' (pardon the pun) with no independent political perspectives from those of Hain and Short. Some opposition.

The problem is, though, that TOM is demanding that 'Time To Go!' adopt the two slogans that TOM has only ever in the most formal sense stood on itself. For instance, in the quoted edition of *Troops Out*, while it trumpets the virtues of the reformist MacBride principles so well loved by US imperialism (p5) and daringly recommends that we write to our MPs (p3), the only place we see its two demands is in its version of a 'where we stand' column on page two. Nowhere do these two demands relate to the practical activity of TOM.



For the IRA, against the British army

In this, if nothing else, it has been consistent. Founded in 1973, this has been its *modus operandi*. 'Troops Out Now!' was shelved for the 'practical' slogans of 'free speech on Ireland' from October 1975 and 'end British involvement in Ireland' in February 1976.

For TOM, the main task was and is to make people 'aware' of what is happening in Ireland. But, so long as British workers accept the legitimacy of British rule, they will accept the means which Britain uses to ensure these ends: yes, the Gibraltar Three may have been slain in cold blood, but the SAS were 'our boys' weren't they? And strip searching and plastic bullets, while they are perceived as being used against 'terrorists' and 'rioters', will be at best viewed as necessary evils.

Unless we fight for workers in Britain to take sides with the IRA and Inla against British imperialism, they will remain at best passive, at worst active allies of British imperialism.

This is proven by the past history of TOM's work. For instance, in 1978, the 'International Tribunal on British War Crimes in Ireland' was established. This dominated TOM work during this period. It did not raise the demand for troops out now; in fact its title was quickly 'sanitised', becoming the International Tribunal on the British Presence in Ireland. The Tribunal was directed against the abuse of British power in Ireland, not its very presence, the real issue.

Yet TOM had great hopes in this ineffectual body: "although the Tribunal does not (and by its nature cannot) call for troops out yet, by exposing the atrocities being perpetrated by the British in the north it may lead more and more people and organisations to the realisation that troops must be withdrawn." (*Troops Out*, February 1979). So who remembers its findings?

TOM has consistently failed to challenge British imperialism and the chauvinism which engenders within the working class here. Without this, its strivings to overcome 'ignorance' can only fall on ears made deaf by their identification with British imperialism. One can only wonder, then, given its record, why it has chosen to withdraw from 'Time To Go!' - surely no worse than its previous campaigns. Might it just be that its leadership had its collective nose put out of joint by being presented with a *fait accompli* by the LCI? Whatever the reason, there can be no way that TOM can provide any alternative for British anti-imperialists.

The Marxist tradition

Opportunist manoeuvring such as this is a million miles away from the anti-imperialist principles of Marxism, which were most clearly expressed by Marx in the context of Ireland. For Marx, the way to approach the Irish question was not to reach some equitable solution, some graduated withdrawal of Britain from its Irish colony. Quite the reverse: Marx wanted an immediate disengagement of Britain, brought about through revolutionary means or, to use an analogy of the Vietnam liberation struggle, to see the Brits leave, clinging to the skids of their helicopters.

Marx's solidarity with the IRA of his day was not mere humanitarianism, it was to help the national Irish revolution, the spark to ignite the British social revolution.

Irish self determination, said Marx, "must be done, not as a matter of sympathy with Ireland but as a demand made in the interests of the English proletariat ... Ireland lost, the British 'Empire' is gone, and the class war in England, till now somnolent and chronic, will assume acute forms." The attitude of British workers must be that "the national emancipation of Ireland is no question of abstract justice or humanitarian sentiment, but the first condition of their own social emancipation." (Marx, from Marx and Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*, pp394, 404 and 408).

That was the crux of the matter; winning the British working class to support of the Irish revolution to facilitate both the Irish and British revolutions. A far cry from the 'solidarity' of 'Time To Go!', which avoids completely the issue of Irish self determination and the revolutionary struggle to bring it about.

Marx, Engels and the First International waged a militant campaign for a general amnesty for Fenian prisoners - a campaign which brought 200,000 workers out in support of the demand in Hyde Park. For 'Time To Go!' the Irish political prisoners in jails in Britain and Ireland are a matter of no concern. When a revolutionary, like Nelson Mandela, is imprisoned by reaction, he becomes a *cause célèbre*. When a revolutionary from Ireland is imprisoned, for the likes of Short and Hain, she or he is a non-person.

The Irish war demands an answer to the question, 'which side are you on?' We hope we have shown the reader exactly which side the leading lights of the charter are on. Marx and Engels were unequivocal as to which side

they were on. Engels advocated an immediate seizure of land by the Irish peasantry, and enthused; "The Irish are teaching our leisurely John Bull to get a move on. That's what comes of shooting!" (*Ibid*, p450). And Marx not only defended, but actually advocated, what would today be condemned by most 'socialists' as terrorism: "Far from opposing so-called excesses, instances of popular revenge against individuals or public buildings that are associated only with hateful recollections must not only be tolerated but the lead in them must be taken." (Marx, Engels CW, Vol.10, p282).

Compare this internationalist stand to the reaction of the LCI after the Harrod's bomb: "In Britain the Harrod's bomb sets back our shared goal of strengthening the Livingstone type dialogue in order to build a withdrawal movement." (*Labour and Ireland*, Vol.2, issue 2).

The violence of the oppressed was blamed for the abject failure of the likes of the LCI to win the working class in Britain to the side of the Irish republicans - a 'left' variant on 'croppy lie down'. We can call this nothing less than chauvinist. The IRA is fighting a war of liberation, and it is up to anti-imperialists in Britain to build support for them is this, not attack them for it as it makes your job more difficult. And Livingstone has shown his true, red white and blue colours enough times, not least when he withdrew from supporting this year's Bloody Sunday demo in the light of the Enniskillen bomb. This is the only 'withdrawal' that the politics of the LCI can ever achieve.

Campaigns which seek to base themselves on the politics and patronage of the likes of Livingstone will find themselves inevitably spouting chauvinist poison like that quoted above. We don't think we will wait very long before we have a neat little collection of quotes from 'Time To Go!' leading lights which will make the statements of the LCI look like the ravings of a wild, ultra-leftist militarist.

Rather than placing our faith in "Livingstone type dialogue", we look to the principles laid down by Marx, continued and developed by the early Communist International and its Communist Party of Great Britain.

The Bolshevik Karl Radek, speaking for the Comintern at the Second World Congress, said that the communists in Britain would not be judged on the basis of articles in favour of liberation in their press, but on the number of communists jailed for agitating for the freedom of the colonies.

The theses of admission to the Comintern stated that: "Every party that wishes to belong to the Communist International has the obligation of exposing the dodges of its 'own' imperialists in the colonies, of supporting every liberation movement in the colonies not only in words but in deeds, of demanding that their imperialist compatriots be thrown out of the colonies." (*Theses, Resolutions and Manifestos of the First Four Congresses of the Third International*, p94).

Note well, *thrown out*, as in Vietnam, not illusory peaceful, equitable withdrawal *a la* 'Time To Go!', Better Life For All, *ad nauseum*. The Comintern was unequivocal in its stand for an Irish victory and *for a British defeat*.

The early CPGB did not have a spotless record on solidarity with the Irish revolution, it is true - its campaign 'Hands Off Ireland!' never really took off - but its stand was qualitatively different from the bourgeois moralists of the charter ilk. CPGB founder-member, William Paul, put forward an exemplary internationalist position in the pamphlet *The Irish Crisis* of 1921. He scorns any 'peace' resulting "because the slaughtering of the Irish will be too expensive to suite the anti-war maniacs of the middle class union, who see ruin for themselves in the increasing burden of taxation." (p11).

Such lines could have been written today about such signatories of 'Time To Go!' as Short, Hain, the CPB sect and the rump which now shames the name CPGB. Paul was clear that the only way that Irish freedom would come would be "by tearing it from the blood red fist of a rapacious imperialism." (*Ibid*).

We can have no time for the liberal apology for solidarity proffered by the likes of 'Time To Go!' Our business, like Connolly's, is revolution. This present charter is incapable of building any effective solidarity with the Irish struggle. Quite the reverse, as it sows illusions in the capability of British imperialism to withdraw as a result of existing "public opinion".

British imperialism is unwilling and, unless through force in Ireland and at home, unable

to get out. As Enoch Powell put it, "Ulster is Britain's test of its own will to be a nation." It is not going to walk away from Ireland as a result of parliamentary pressure or carnivals. Even if it could, it would result, at the most, in a Zimbabwe rather than a Cuba or Vietnam off Britain's shores, and this would necessitate the neutralisation of any independent working class activity in both Ireland and Britain.

This is what, at bottom, our 'chartists' are hoping for. Many of its supporters are virulently anti-republican, deeply hostile to the idea of both revolution in Ireland and in Britain. It is in no way solidarity, it is yet another reformist sham.

Many British leftists, if they have read this far, will no doubt have proceeded with increasing frustration. "But Sinn Fein supports it!", they will cry: "What sort of solidarity is it that goes against those who you are supposed to be solidarising with?"

As we have consistently argued in this paper, this is not the communist position. Solidarity work should not be the stalking ground of inveterate tailists or dispirited British leftists. Solidarity - *real* solidarity - must be founded on an independent proletarian basis: "There is one, and only one, kind of real internationalism, and that is working whole-heartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in one's own country, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy and material aid) this struggle, this, and only this, line, in every country without exception." (VI Lenin, CW, Vol 24, p75).

We support an independent proletarian line in every country, while supporting the revolutionary content of struggles world wide. If an aspect of these struggles departs from a rigorously revolutionary democratic position, we must honestly say so, and seek to rectify it through fraternal criticism, and through our practice.

The Leninist alternative

Events like the twentieth anniversary of the renewed presence of British troops on Irish streets will almost inevitably bring the assorted guilt trippers and glory seekers of British bourgeois politics out of the woodwork, purveying their political flotsam and jetsam along with their egos.

It is tempting to just let the parliamentary cretins of 'Time To Go!' get on with it before they scuttle back to their committee rooms. The lasting impact of this will be nil, just as with all the other similar ephemera over the last twenty years. It is undoubtedly a contemptible morass of opportunist dregs and liberal sentiment.

Such a boycott would, however, not only be a mistake; it would be to fail in our duty to both the Irish and British revolutions. The 'Time To Go!' charter will be peddling its wares to workers in Britain for over a year. Its reformist platform must be actively and rigorously exposed throughout this time for what it is - pro-imperialist.

The charter is ostensibly raising the issue of Ireland within the workers' movement. It will undoubtedly generate activity and interest among the very people who must be won to a genuine anti-imperialist position. We must therefore take the opportunity throughout the year to show that 'Time To Go!' is not raising the Irish question within the working class - the issue of the war and the national oppression of the Irish people by British imperialism - but seeking a liberal diversion, channelled into the dead end of parliamentary politics.

It is down to us to raise the question of Irish freedom within this climate. And we must hammer home the answers to this: that the enemy is at home, fight for troops out now and self determination for the Irish people.

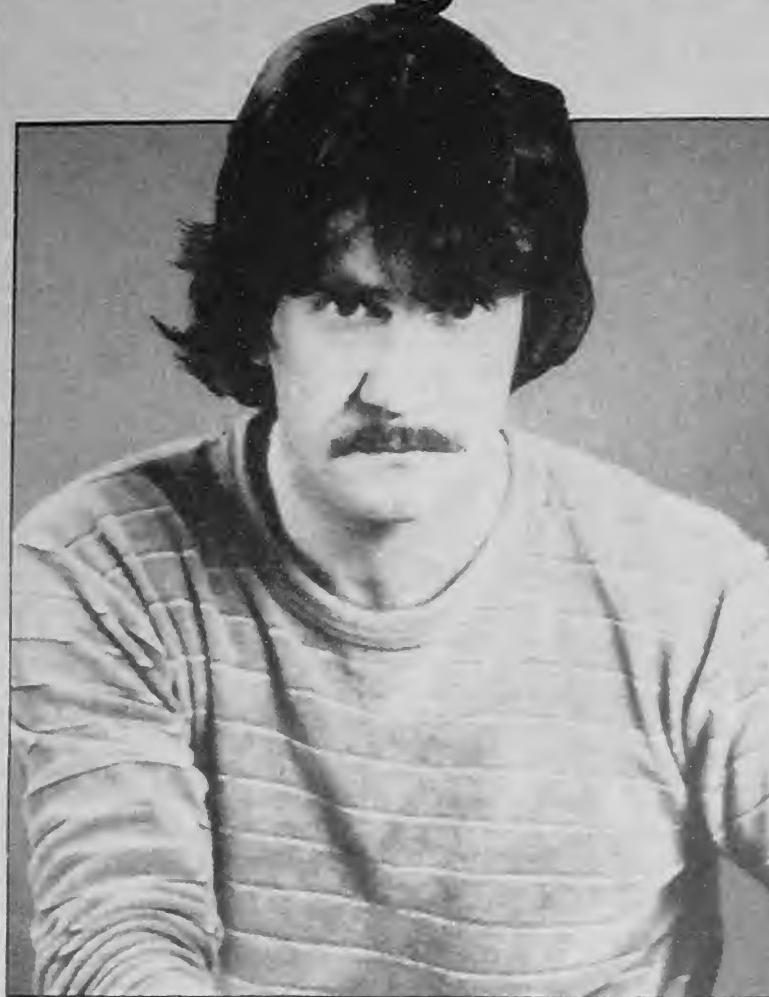
This must be done on the basis of not merely words, not the sterile grumblings of TOM, but through relating these slogans to action, through intervention within and against the reformist forum provided by the charter, at its meetings, conferences, carnival and demonstrations.

The Leninist calls on all genuine anti-imperialists to unitedly intervene on the 'Time to Go!' demonstration and carnival. We must seize the opportunity provided by the twentieth anniversary of this phase of the Irish war to challenge British imperialism and its opportunist hangers on. The issue of the Irish revolution must be placed on the top of the agenda for the working class in Britain. With revolutionary, anti-imperialist politics it can be.

Alan Merrick

- Troops Out Now!
- Self determination for the Irish people as a whole!
- Make Ireland Thatcher's Vietnam!

Raising the banner



Dick Gaughan: a welcome contribution

The latest edition of the Spartacist League's paper, Workers Hammer, had a most interesting photo and caption. The caption informed the reader that the photo was of the Spart contingent on a picket to protest at the murder of Benjamin Molaise. However, the only visible faces in the picture were those of Nina Temple, Ian McKay and Dave Cook, all members of the EC of the CPGB. Wonders abound! Obviously, the Sparts' attempts at infiltrating the CPGB were far more successful than we had all believed. Next week, we hope to have a juicy exposé on Martin Jacques' little known associations with the International Communist Current.

At the recent national demonstration calling for freedom for Mandela in London, a certain leaflet was given out, denouncing the "commercialisation" of Nelson Mandela by the AAM. This claimed to be from the City AA Group. In fact, City AA had nothing to do with the leaflet, any more than the bogus Nelson Mandela speaks pamphlet, distributed at the 'Free Mandela' concert, had anything to do with the AAM or ANC. Both examples of this black propaganda are produced by someone - not a million miles from South Africa House - who wants to fling mud at the liberation and solidarity movements.

Avid readers of this And column will no doubt have been perched on the edge of their armchairs with bated breath, since it was announced a couple of issues ago that the Proletarian group of pro-whoevers in power in the Kremlin had split. This was always a "potty" group, but that does not mean that all we have to do is have a good laugh. Through our letter box has popped a document from various ex-Proles proclaiming their resignation. Good for them. But wrongly it gives us no more facts than their last little leaflet. It reiterates (more verbosely) the fact that Prole 'kingpin' Keith Nilsen is an 'egomaniac' but darkly states that he has an un-named secret which makes him unfit to be called a communist. The ex-Proles say that "open polemics ... would only give our enemies cause to rejoice" so they refuse to tell us what their ex-great leader is supposed to have done. This is a contemptible form of struggle.

Given the domination of our movement by centrism over many decades, the steady shift to the right and now the rapid process of disintegration of the 'official' world communist movement, it is hardly surprising that most progressive artists with real originality, honesty, drive, talent and a determination to change the world find themselves unattracted by communism today (it is foolish indeed to blame bourgeois propaganda for this). Musician Dick Gaughan is therefore a very rare creature in today's Britain - an artist openly committed to the cause of communism.

Recently he has penned an article on class and culture for the *Morning Star* (June 27 1988) where

he offers his perspective for a Marxist approach to the arts and its role in the class struggle today. The *Morning Star* announced that it would print contributions on the issues Gaughan raised.

We welcome any attempt by communists to put their ideas into print. We welcome debate, even if it is limited to the question of art. The clash of ideas on such subjects can produce very important general lessons. It can allow the working class to examine and weigh up the positions of the various strands, shades and groups which make up the communist movement. In this way we believe advanced workers will be won to take the side of those who stand on the principles of genuine communism, those capable of leading the British revolution ie *The Leninist*, simply because only a revolution offers the working class true liberation.

It is in this spirit, the spirit of open ideological struggle that we enter debate. Our criticisms of Gaughan, though on occasion sharp, are delivered in comradeship. We would welcome it if Gaughan or any of his co-thinkers respond to our article. It could only help in the task of developing the understanding communists have of how art can be used. *The Leninist* certainly considers this an important component part of our struggle to build a genuine communist party in Britain, not for us the philistinism of beer and bingo workerism.

It is instructive to look at Dick Gaughan himself. For those that do not know his work, we can say wholeheartedly that he is a singer and songwriter of talent who has grown from a traditional folk background, through the electric folk scene of the 1970's into a more directly political performer. He is an artist of stature rightly respected in many countries of the world.

Gaughan was prominent during the miners' Great Strike. He threw himself into playing benefits and concerts throughout the country and did his upmost to support the NUM leadership in political dis-

putes in his hometown of Edinburgh (although for his own reasons he sees himself as coming from Leith, as distinct from Edinburgh). His electric live performances were full of an abrasive emotional intensity expressing his hatred of the injustices of capitalism and his confidence in the working class. His solidarity was much appreciated.

However, politically, Gaughan has suffered from centrist confusion. After leaving the CPGB he rejoined a few years back determined to throw in his lot with those he saw as fighting the growing hold on the party by the Eurocommunists. This was a worthy aim. But his 'lesser of two evils' theory of politics falsely led him to identify the *Morning Star* with opposition to Eurocommunism. Hence he has gone with the CPB split.

Nevertheless as long as he keeps his dynamism - not a trait normally associated with members of the CPB - and continues to question the total inability of the official movement to provide any effective leadership we are confident that he will soon find himself at odds with the likes of Chater and Hicks. Certainly, if Gaughan is serious about the struggle for socialism, he must break from the centrist straight jacket. He is, undoubtedly, the sort of personality we need in the battle to build the genuine Communist Party our working class in Britain needs in order to conquer and maintain state power.

Hardly surprisingly at this moment in time though Gaughan suffers from many of the opportunist illusions of his 'party', not least an identification of the interests of the working class with the trade union and labour bureaucracy. His *Morning Star* article is in fact based on this dangerous notion.

Frankly it fawns and bows before the trade union bureaucracy and like every article in the *Morning Star*, it is directed to the bureaucracy itself and preserving its parasitic existence, not the working class and the struggle for socialist revolution which of necessity involves breaking the hold of the bureaucracy.

Specifically Gaughan praises the Scottish TUC, giving them credit for its token and cynical patronage of the arts in recent years. He asks it to "promote more of the talents rooted in, and relating to the working class." Gaughan takes his encouragement from STUC sponsorship of the theatre companies, 7.84 and Wildcat. Why? He knows better than us that they are run by an opportunist clique who have dominated 'left wing' theatre in Scotland for years and who have backed up the Assembly campaign with mawkish sentimental "Who's like us" plays about the 'guid auld days' of the steamie (public wash-house) and, most recently, that pinnacle of 'working class culture', bingo. This patronising wallowing in the backwardness of the working class contributes nothing to the struggle for socialism. But then neither does the present leadership of the STUC.

It is true that the STUC has financed a few books and recordings (including one by Gaughan of songs of the Great Strike). But this is part of a *Marxism Today* inspired broad democratic alliance strategy to court public sympathy for the trade union bureaucracy ...

and more than that. The STUC is a living example of a Euro/Kinnockite lash up. In reality, its new found love of the arts is an arm of its so-called new realism. It is a substitute for struggle. This is the content of the STUC's turn to 'culture' and Gaughan ought to have the honesty to admit it.

Apart from STUC patronage, the vehicles Gaughan sees as spreading a Marxist understanding of the arts are the arts page of the *Morning Star* and the CPB's theoretical journal. This does not inspire hope.

The former, as Gaughan implies, like the rest of this social chauvinist rag, is not renowned for debate (we will see if it prints our contribution to its 'discussion' on the arts). Indeed, there is a passage in Gaughan's own article which sums up a genuine communist's attitude to the *Morning Star*: "we want to win critical, participating audiences who won't accept vacuous, simplistic productions as valid because they contain a scarlet banner or a bit of social criticism."

As for the 'bi-monthly' CPB theoretical journal, we won't hold our breath. The CPB did not even have a banner on May Day and nothing on the demonstration against Evren's visit. Only with the Anti-Apartheid Movement's July 17 demonstration did the CPB decide at last to go public - with about 20 people and two banners. Seeing how long it has taken the CPB to actually venture out into the world it does not surprise us that its journal is still on the drawing board.

Anyway the chances of the *Morning Star* and its CPB lodgers winning artists for socialism, what Gaughan is banking on, are the same as the *Morning Star* and the CPB - with their reformist, amateurish and part time approach to politics and organisation - leading the British revolution, ie nil. Firstly, as we have said above both arms of Chaterism lack the get up and go, secondly neither arm is committed to the only genuine form of socialism, the socialism that is born of violent revolution and takes the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Chaterism, just like the STUC and *Marxism Today*, are committed body and soul to reformism.

So, what should be the approach of the artist committed to communism operating in Britain in 1988? The task is clear. Everything must be thrown into the struggle to build a genuine Communist Party. Without such a Party there is no hope for revolution and socialism, with it everything is possible.

In a revolutionary situation every branch of the arts is thrown into turmoil as the old is rejected and new answers are sought. A genuine Communist Party would do its upmost to gain hegemony over progressive artists. But more than that it would cultivate and train a layer of artists who would be members of the Party and who would use their talents to promote the ideas of communism. In short, a genuine Communist Party would create a cadre of creative artists, ranging from agitators and propagandists to those operating in the various fields of high culture, as an arm of the revolution.

But what do we do now, while the working class is being attacked with greater and greater intensity and the organisations of the working class are in such disarray? We do not keep our heads down and try to do what we can with the STUC as Gaughan suggests.

What is essential for any form of communist activity is theoretical clarity and an unyielding commitment to revolution. The same goes for communist artists.

Gavin Kyle



NCP Mark II

Communist Party of Britain, Communist Party of Britain, Re-establishment Congress, no date, pp29, £0.75

THIS DOCUMENT is very amateurish. It is a typical product of a movement that knows no way to live other than through political prostitution and has lost all ability to take a critical look at itself.

In the middle of the text of a speech by A we suddenly find a photo of B, we also find irrelevant material like application forms and gushing 'interviews' with the likes of *Morning Star* editor and charismatic CPB leader, Tony Chater, inserted with apparent abandon. Indeed there seems to be a complete lack of a clear editing hand. These could be considered quibbles but I think it reflects the general sloppy social democratic approach to politics.

It is not my intention in this review to go over the proceedings of the formation of the Communist Party of Britain at its "re-establishment" congress at North London Poly over April 23-24. There would be little point in this.

We have already given it extensive and devastating coverage; conclusively showing that the CPB is a product of the degeneration and disintegration of 'official' communism and far from being a genuine Marxist-Leninist organisation, based as it is on the thoroughly reformist *British Road to Socialism*, it is a right centrist rump.

No, what we will use this review for is in order to develop three main observations about the CPB. Firstly, the fact that this is the first publication to come from the CPB since it was formed. Secondly the manner in which the CPB presents its debates and thirdly that the prospects for the CPB are bleak.

It is, of course, perfectly natural and correct that a new organisation (and the CPB for all its pretensions to have "re-established" the CPGB is a new organisation) to have as its first publication a report of its founding congress. But it is very significant that this "communist" "party" has taken nearly three full months to produce it, although it is not dated, it was first advertised in mid July. This is a product of the CPB's casual, laid back and part time attitude to politics, after all it does have a part time general secretary. What is more, this report is at this moment in time still the *only* printed evidence we have from the CPB that it actually exists. It has after all no paper, no pamphlets, no journal, only this little publication.

A true communist organisation, not least one that calls itself a "party", would have taken weeks, not months to produce what should be a key document. Oh yes, if this was a full, unexpurgated version, if it was the minutes of the CPB's congress, the time lag would be understandable.

But what we have here is edited highlights of the speeches of the CPB's chiefs, tiny snippets of speeches by selected followers - nearly half the speeches are completely absent (we are only given 35 out of 64, excluding openings

and replies to debates). Given this, why has it taken the CPB so long to get its act together? This is a question CPB members ought to be directing at its leadership and its full time staff.

From what we have seen (or not seen) of the CPB such lethargy does not surprise us.

The first important test of the CPB was the annual May Day demonstration in London. While some CPB bureaucrats did their best to sabotage it, Tom Durkin led a mere handful of CPBers up to Ally Pally under a 'Brent Communists' banner - hardly an auspicious start for Britain's "re-established" "Communist Party". Our contingent dwarfed the CPB and put it to complete shame when it came to discipline and militancy. As we said at the time: "news of the birth of the CPB is much exaggerated."

Since then the CPB has done nothing to make us alter this assessment. For instance, on the large July 17 AAM Freedom for Mandela demonstration the CPB presence consisted of no more than twenty people behind two banners.

For an organisation which initially claimed to "organise the majority of communists in Britain" this is pathetic. Even for an organisation which now says it has only 1,500 members it is still pathetic and the same goes if we take our estimate of its true size, ie at something less than 1,300.

Let us now turn to how the CPB presents itself. This is a very important question. We are not talking about wrapping here but honesty. Readers of *The Leninist* will be fully aware that although most delegates to its founding congress did their utmost to maintain the veneer of unity and unanimity there were differences on what are for the CPB - though not anyone else - central questions. For example there were divisions over the CPB's adopted programme, the BRS, the attitude towards the NCP and the position of women in the CPB.

In a genuine communist organisation differences between comrades are natural and not at all unhealthy. Certainly wrong ideas can only be fought and overcome in the open. On the other hand, for an organisation actually based on wrong (ie opportunist) ideas openness is an anathema.

Those who regularly read our paper will be perfectly aware that what we preach, we practice. Our paper has an unrivalled record of open ideological debate.

When comrades around our paper have developed political differences with us over this, that or the other, we do not hide their criticisms as if we should be ashamed, as if our organisation has some unmentionable disease. This is the CPB method. We take the opposite approach. We have published in full criticisms made of us and subjected them to often lengthy replies.

This is a sign of our ideological strength, a sign of our confidence and a sign of our understanding that correct ideas are forged in the heat of polemic. What a contrast to the CPB.

Looking at the CPB's extracts from the proceedings of its congress it is clear they have been "edited" so as to remove anything that smacks of controversy. For example, certain notable speakers have disappeared, while all references to the NCP have been deleted from Derek Robinson's contribution.

It is perfectly clear that the CPB's approach is born of opportunist theory and bodes ill for those in the CPB - who instead of joining it in order to retire from active politics as have so many - think

they have joined a revolutionary organisation.

Quite frankly and in all seriousness for an honest assessment of their congress, CPB comrades will be far better off studying the report and assessment we carried in *The Leninist* than relying on the sieved version of events presented by their leadership.

The CPB is clearly led by those with the narrowest of bureaucratic mentalities. The fact that the CPB has found it necessary to present itself almost without flaw, that there has been a conscious sweeping of differences under the carpet, a sanitisation of the whole congress is not a sign of strength but weakness. In terms of 'official' communism it is of the Brezhnev era not that of so-called *glasnost*.

But in whatever guise 'official' communism comes in, it is doomed. We will repeat our prediction; the CPB will never lead the working class into struggle against the bourgeoisie, the CPB is an opportunist organisation under the surface riven with differences and will sooner or later plunge into terminal crisis.

That it has taken so long to produce such a miserable congress report, that the CPB's sallies into practice have been so half hearted and amateurish can only but encourage factional discontent with the leadership. It can only be a matter of time before we see the CPB produce its first splits, indeed it can only be a matter of time before the CPB is torn apart by factional divisions. The CPB leaders determination to ban factionalism is akin to banning death, the CPB cannot escape its fate.

Jack Conrad

Bolshevik Woman

Cathy Porter, Larissa Reisner, Virago Press 1988, pp195, £5.50.

BECAUSE IT has embraced feminism, women's liberation is at the heart of the crisis of 'official' communism. The Euro-feminists are self-obsessed, unable to see beyond bourgeois society and unable to achieve anything. The centrists are equally bankrupt. They point to the socialist countries as the model. This convinces no one.

The inequality, lack of efficient contraception and second class socio-political status cannot be denied. Nor can the fact that women in the socialist countries, not least the Soviet Union, are oppressed through family life and the rearing of children gratis. They still suffer a double burden and under Gorbachev are expected to fit into the bourgeois mould of cheap worker and sex object (there is now a Miss USSR).

No, our model is not the Soviet Union of today. Thanks to Cathy Porter we have another, far more worthy model. In addition to translating some of Alexandra Kollontai's works into English, Porter has written several books on the lives of women in the Russian revolution. Now she has written a biography of Larissa Reisner, a remarkable woman and a true model for revolutionaries.

Porter succeeds in her aim of letting Reisner "and those who knew her explain for themselves the nature and the causes of the worship she inspired in her lifetime, as well as some of the resistance she encountered." (p5) In rescuing Reisner from historical obscurity Porter has performed an important service for genuine communists.

As Porter rightly points out, Reisner personifies a "new Soviet woman" embodying "all the heroic newness of the revolution". Her account of Reisner's actions and descriptions of the conditions she worked in enables us to appreciate Reisner's extraordinary life.

Born in 1895, Reisner was one of the first women to attend St Petersburg University. Her parents were socialists, but of the middle class variety. Initially Reisner herself could be said to belong to the second generation of Russian 'socialist feminists' but life itself soon demanded a break from feminism (this is inadequately dealt with by the 'socialist feminist' Porter).

A writer from her teenage years, at university Reisner belonged to the 'poetry circle'. The outbreak of war in August 1914 allowed no dawdling. While most of her literary friends shifted from aesthetic detachment to patriotism, she moved into active politics and towards working class socialism. After publishing her own anti-war magazine *Rudin*, she quickly came under the influence of those committed to bringing peace through revolution, submitting pro-Bolshevik articles to the journal *New Life*.

By 1917 she was teaching literacy classes at workers' and sailors' clubs in Petrograd (where she met her husband, Fyodor Raskolnikov - the leader of the Red Sailors). She was therefore at the very heart of the revolution. Porter speculates that she may have even taken part in the storming of the Winter Palace.

In the ensuing civil war, she fought gun in hand with the Volga Naval Fleet, becoming the Red Army's first woman political commissar, overcoming male chauvinism with a combination of forceful persuasion and example. "living under bullets with the armed masses and giving them culture". (p75) Her *Letters from the Front* is an invaluable eye-witness account of the civil war and the problems of overcoming backward attitudes.

She "rejoiced immediately in the new culture born of 1917"; she lived and wrote the revolution. As Radek said after her death: "Her one theme is the October Revolution." (p6) She was unwaveringly devoted to it and it certainly comes to life in her work.

As a genuine communist she never distorted, she upheld "the duty of all writers to describe the contradictions of the life around them 'without adornment or varnish'". (p169) Hence to the historians of the revolution she taught the importance of combining action, inspiration and honesty; "We understand what value these books, born of the revolution,

have for the future, for they are incorruptible eye-witnesses of its sufferings, heroism and dirt, its poverty and magnificence..." (p169)

Her writings, the writings of one who lived through and made momentous events, deserve to become part of the collective memory of the working class.

Cathy Porter unfortunately tends sometimes to be more concerned with 'personal politics' than with the revolution and women's experience of the massive changes in family life brought about by the revolution itself and by the progressive laws passed by the Bolsheviks.

Revealingly she remarks that Reisner writes "more of the sacrifice and the heroism than of her own needs and feelings" ... thank goodness. The self obsessed will never change anything, let alone make a revolution.

Of course, those interested in navel gazing will find what they are looking for: "beneath the surface of her writings can be detected many of the inner conflicts and insecurities she faced as a woman."

True, like most people, Reisner's life was full of conflicts. Alongside her enthusiasm for and delight in "the shocking formless and incomparably beautiful face of the revolution" there existed what was in the main an unhappy personal life and a certain loneliness.

But what makes Reisner important is not her "inner conflicts and insecurities" but the fact that she overcame them in order to serve the revolution.

This 'woman of the new type' stands as a model for women today the world over. Because she was committed to the theory and practice of women's liberation, Reisner eschewed the feminism that grips the minds of so many radical women in the West today, not least Cathy Porter. Reisner understood full well that only the unity of working men and women in the struggle for revolution could bring real freedom.

She and her contemporary female revolutionaries, like Kollontai, Krupskaya, Armand and Luxemburg were heroic, not simply because they endured material deprivation and personal insecurity, but because their commitment to communism enabled them to achieve great things.

They broke with the safety as well as the constraints of bourgeois society. This had its costs but, having paid the price, their lives were not predictable, drab, mundane or wasted. Instead of pursuing narrow self advancement and self fulfilment they contributed to the greatest cause of all, the liberation of humanity. There is no finer cause.

Mary Goodwin

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THE LENINIST

What lies behind Iran's acceptance of the UN Resolution 598?
We talked to the Organisation of Revolutionary Workers of Iran

Do you think the offer to have a ceasefire is genuine and do you think it will stick?

To answer that we must understand why Iran has made this diplomatic move. It was to avoid military defeat.

With the intervention of the Western powers into the region the war entered a new phase, the balance of forces changed, the Islamic regime was progressively weakened.

This has two aspects, an external one and an internal one.

Militarily with the presence of the Nato forces Iran had to fight on a much extended front. This put an immense strain on its resources. Also, diplomatically, Iran found itself increasingly isolated. In the end Iran ended up by only having one genuine ally, Syria, and even here there was conflict.

The second external factor was the fact that Iraq was able to gain a military advantage. After its defeats in 1982 Iraq began to reorganise its forces. It developed a highly effective system of mobile defence, hiding behind massive fortifications and using a very rapid system of moving forces from one place to another.

This in effect enabled Iraq to more or less withstand Iran's human wave attacks. Those 'breakthroughs' that Iran managed to gain in the Fao Peninsula, the Basra region and later on in Kurdistan were at enormous cost. But on the whole the military balance began to change in favour of Iraq as it had access to the world's arms markets and was able to pay for this because unlike Iran it could boost its oil production in spite of the war.

This brings us to the internal factors. We can look at this from a military and economic point of view. Militarily Iran depends on voluntary forces, the bsij. They are only in uniform for short periods, three months per year. They constitute - along with the so-called Revolutionary Guards - Iran's main striking force.

As its ability to mobilise this force has diminished, its ability to stage attacks also diminished. This reached the stage where Iran lost its offensive capability.

So would you say that Iran which, taken in the abstract is far stronger than Iraq, was unable to organise a total war economy?

It was never able to fully mobilise and commit all its resources. There are a number of reasons for this. We can say that it was politically and economically impossible to go for a full mobilisation. Economically Iran has been crumbling, there have been major closures and oil revenues have been falling. Under these conditions, to have gone for total mobilisation would have put an enormous strain on those above and those below.

Anyway what we have seen is a diminishing ability of Iran to mobilise militarily. If we couple that with the balance in armaments between the two countries Iran is the loser.

What has happened in the last few weeks was a gradual collapse at the front. The regime's policy of protracted war has now given way to a search for a political settlement in order to prevent a complete military defeat.

Whether there will actually be a ceasefire - and whether or not it will lead to peace - this is something we have to keep our options open on. What one can say is that if Iran thinks it can carry on the war it will do so. Certainly its acceptance of UN Resolution 598 is no tactic but an acceptance of a political and ideological defeat in

War and peace

order to prevent a military defeat.

This political and ideological defeat will change the whole balance of power between the various factions above and between above and below.

Khomeini's much published recent speech was an attempt to prevent further divisions in the regime and avoid a complete schism between the forces that constitute it.

The make up of the Islamic regime and the decision making process is such that sudden turns are common and in the future we should not be surprised to see sudden changes, even 180 degree changes. One has to remember that the regime gets part of its legitimacy from the Hezbollah - the so-called radicals - the recent acceptance of a ceasefire seriously endangers this support.

It has been said that one of the reasons why there has been such a sudden about face by Iran was because Khomeini is dying. Without Khomeini's authority such a move would have caused political turmoil. Do you give any credence to that?

I think that it would have been extremely difficult to have put forward an acceptance of a ceasefire with Khomeini dead. It had to be done while Khomeini is still alive.

Would that be because of splits in the ruling stratum or because of a welling up of mass discontent?

Probably mass discontent. Remember over a million people have died in the war. It would lead to an undermining of the support for this reactionary regime by those who

still do believe in its ideas. The relationship between them and the ruling ayatollahs would be disrupted. With Khomeini still alive it makes this pill a little less bitter.

Our organisation and yours have argued for revolutionary defeatism, that the interests of the Iranian masses would be best served by a defeat of the Khomeini regime by the Iranian masses. Will Iraq's defeat of Iran take the struggle forward, will defeat breed revolution?

Let me first endorse what you say, communists stand for revolutionary defeatism in Iran, that is defeatism by the people and not defeat by another reactionary state. There can be no doubt that the regime will have great difficulty in disguising its defeat.

But let us remember the war is not over. Iran will remain on a war footing (armed peace) for some time to come. There can be no question, however that the military, political and ideological defeat it has suffered will have far reaching consequences and improve the conditions for a revolutionary upheaval, even Western diplomats have noted the anti-war mood in the masses. Certainly if the regime attempted a major offensive then anti-war feelings would rise to boiling point.

We must also note that the regime needs to carry out a series of economic reforms to dampen down popular discontent. A position of no war, no peace will lessen its room for manoeuvre.

Certain revolutionary groups in the imperialist countries have sided

with Iran because of the intervention of the Nato fleet and the tilting of the military/diplomatic balance towards Iraq. What is the correct attitude for communists to take?

Any revolutionary, any lover of peace must demand the removal of all Nato forces from the area. They are there for reactionary reasons. Unfortunately some interpret this as support for Iran against the United States, supporting an ultra reactionary regime which is crushing its own people because it is 'opposing' imperialism. This is to rob anti-imperialism of its class content. Therefore we have the ludicrous situation of some groups supporting a reactionary as against an imperialist regime in the name of the revolution. Iran is fighting a reactionary, not a progressive war.

How do you think the standing of such groups as the Tudeh and the Mujahadeen etc will be affected by the acceptance of a ceasefire?

The acceptance of the ceasefire was essentially a victory for the Iranian people and a defeat for the regime. In this light all those who opposed the war share in that victory. Clearly those organisations that were the most persistent, most consistently revolutionary, who unambiguously stood for a just peace have a greater share in the victory.

Tudeh has always asked for a just peace but has always been very vague about details. When it was in coalition with the Islamic Republic a just peace meant a peace without annexations but with reparations. After the break with the

Islamic Republic it continued to put forward the slogan of a just peace but specified no details. Most other rightist groups, like the Fedaiyan Majority have been little different. Their peace is essentially a no war demand, this is not a communist position. We want a peace from below not a peace from above.

Has imperialism been strengthened by Iran's defeat?

Undoubtedly the Iran-Iraq war and Iran's dream of exporting the Islamic revolution has allowed the imperialist powers to strengthen their position in the region. The arrival of a huge imperialist armada in the Gulf, the arming of Saudi Arabia has created a situation where imperialism has asserted its power which had taken such a blow with the overthrow of the Shah.

The whole region has been turned into a huge military camp.

The duty of all progressive and revolutionary forces to not only oppose the presence of the Nato fleet but to stop the sale of arms to the region which has helped fan war and offset capitalism's economic crisis.

We must emphasise that in the event of a ceasefire Iran will do its utmost to increase its sales of oil in order to rebuild its military machine.

Do you think that the acceptance of 598 will produce splits in the regime? This is as you know a vitally important question; through divisions between the rulers mass discontent will find expression.

Possibly not in the short term. Khomeini's intervention will tend to prevent that. But the fact that Iran has retreated on Resolution 598 can only but increase the already highly tense situation between the various factions above and those below.

As you will be aware our analysis is that in Iran we have a theocratic bonapartist regime of ayatollahs straddling and balancing the Hezbollah - what the West calls the radicals - and the bazaar bourgeoisie, the so-called traditionalists. This coalition will be put under strain.

We can therefore predict increasing tensions above. The nature of this regime which relies on popularism must be greatly influenced by its military, ideological and political defeat.

Either there must be a major change in policy or it will have to resort to force in order to prevent opposition to its current policy. Looking at the various speeches that followed Khomeini's backing of the decision to accept a ceasefire it is clear that there has not been an abandonment of the *raison d'être* of the regime.

What has happened is that there has been an amalgamation of the policy of exporting the Islamic 'revolution' and the pursuit of that goal through building a model society, 'exporting by example'. The attempts to marry the two, by Khomeini and others, is basically unstable.

Undoubtedly clashes above will create space below. A space that will allow the revolutionary and democratic movement to grow. For the left in Iran it is vital to make clear to the people of Iran that the war is not over, it is vital to make it clear that as long as this regime is in power there will be war and the danger of war.

Peace will not come from the regime of the ayatollahs. Peace will only come through the overthrow of the regime. The political, military and ideological defeat of the regime opens the way for a new revolution.

This is the text of a leaflet initiated by the ORWI and sponsored by, among others, 'The Leninist' for distribution at the AAM demonstration on July 17

Victory to the South African Revolution!

THE South African revolution has not been defeated. In spite of the state of emergency, the most savage repression, death squads, intense press censorship and every kind of limitation on democracy, the apartheid regime has been unable to overcome the crisis threatening its very existence.

The working class and people of South Africa have shown their determination, resolve and ability to come together and organise in opposition to the regime. The key role played by the working class in the South African revolution has become even clearer in the last three years. The South African working class, organised in their hundreds of thousands in the Congress of South African Trade Unions, has shown its maturity. The mass general strike this year was a clear sign of the muscle of this revolutionary class, and gave a lie to the apartheid regime's claim to have 'quelled unrest'. Cosatu has been able to recreate its leadership in spite of widespread murder, arrests and intimidation.

The leading role of the working class in the South African revolution reveals, once more, the truth that no democratic revolution can hope to succeed today without this revolutionary class at its helm. Without working class leadership not only socialism, but even true democracy, is unattainable.

Over the last decade, the balance of class forces inside South Africa has changed in favour of the forces of revolution and democracy. The Apartheid regime has lost its strategic initiative and finds itself unable to suppress the revolutionary situation.

The reforms offered by the regime are rejected by the masses as sops. The only reform they would be satisfied with is 'one person, one vote'. That is something the regime is unable to offer, as to do so would mean abolishing itself. The choice in South Africa is therefore either fascism or revolution.

Nothing highlights this question better than the rising number of arrests, bannings, tortures, mur-

ders and executions.

Along with all revolutionary and progressive forces of the world, we demand the immediate and unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners in South Africa. We also strongly condemn the death sentence passed on the 'Sharpeville Six' and demand their immediate and unconditional release.

- Smash apartheid's jails!
- Long live international solidarity!
- Long live democracy!
- Long live socialism!

Chile Democratico
Latin American Cultural Centre
Communist Party of Chile
Chilean Teachers in Exile (CHI-TEX)

Left Revolutionary Movement (MIR)

Chilean TUC - UK
Organisation of Revolutionary

Workers of Iran (Rah-e Kargar)

The Leninist

Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey

Unemployed **ORGANISER**

Smash 'Workfare'!



Unemployed Workers Charter concert against the ETP

Compere, Ian Cognito; Comedy, Jim Tavaré, Felix; Music by Thrum; Workers' Theatre and Poetry

Sunday, September 4, from 8pm: Culross Hall, Battlebridge Rd (behind Kings Cross Station), London

50p (unwaged), £2 (waged)

No to ETP



•The unity of employed and unemployed workers is the key to smashing 'Workfare'

THE unemployed are on the front-line of the bosses' attacks on the working class in Britain today. Those on supplementary benefit have had their standard of living drastically cut on the new 'Income Support' system. All the unemployed – along with low paid employed workers – are being hit by the new Housing Benefit rules; now the unemployed have to pay rates – which means another cut in benefit. And soon the slave labour Employment Training Programme will be imposed on us. It means you work for your benefit, or you starve.

But where is the resistance to this? In the '60s, people used to say that if unemployment went above one million, there would be a revolution. By rights, then, we should have had at least four of them by now.

The leaders of the 'official' workers' movement – people like Kinnock and Willis – have done nothing to defend the unemployed. In fact, they have stabbed us in the back. They have even welcomed government slave labour schemes like YTS, JTS and now ETP.

We can't rely on them to defend the unemployed, with or without them we will fightback. To do that we need **ORGANISATION**. We need organisation to smash all slave labour schemes through winning trade unions to boycott it. We also need **ORGANISATION** to put a stop to the harassment of the unemployed and fight for work at trade union rates or full maintenance for the unemployed. But we don't need pious calls for the TUC and the unions to do this, that and everything sometime soon, sometime never, we need **ACTION NOW!**

That is what the Unemployed Workers Charter is all about. We are an organisation of both employed and unemployed, fighting for the rights of the unemployed in the here and now.

One important step towards

mobilising active resistance to attacks on the unemployed is the UWC's **Lobby of the TUC on September 5**. This is the first day of the TUC Congress and the day that the ETP is introduced. The lobby is of more than symbolic importance, it is designed to change minds through mass pressure. A TUC boycott would be a body blow against ETP. Our lobby is demanding that the TUC reverses its general council vote (19 to 14) to collaborate with ETP.

The response that we've had so far on this has been good. Most unemployed workers' centres are just tea and sympathy centres. Those that aren't, like the Camden Unemployed Action Centre, are backing the lobby. Unemployed activists, including workers on the Community Programme (which the ETP replaces) have joined in with work for the lobby, responding to the call in the last issue of *Unemployed Organiser*. Trade union branches up and down the country have asked for UWC speakers and have ordered bulk copies of our paper. In short, the response has been excellent.

The last issue of *Unemployed Organiser* sold out far quicker than we had expected. This is great: the lobby bandwagon is rolling, and picking up speed. But it is not too late to get involved: there is still lots of work to be done. Though we have transport coming from various areas of the country to both the Lobby and the send off concert the night before in London, there are still many areas uncovered, still many more workers – employed and unemployed – who could and should be mobilised.

The UWC has no time for those doom mongers who say that nothing can be done, or that we have to wait for the next election. The time to fight is now!

Fight with the UWC, and join us on the Lobby on September 5.
•Boycott ETP 'Workfare'!
•Real jobs with real pay!
•Organise the Unemployed!

YTS workers die for profits



•Fight YTS murder for profits

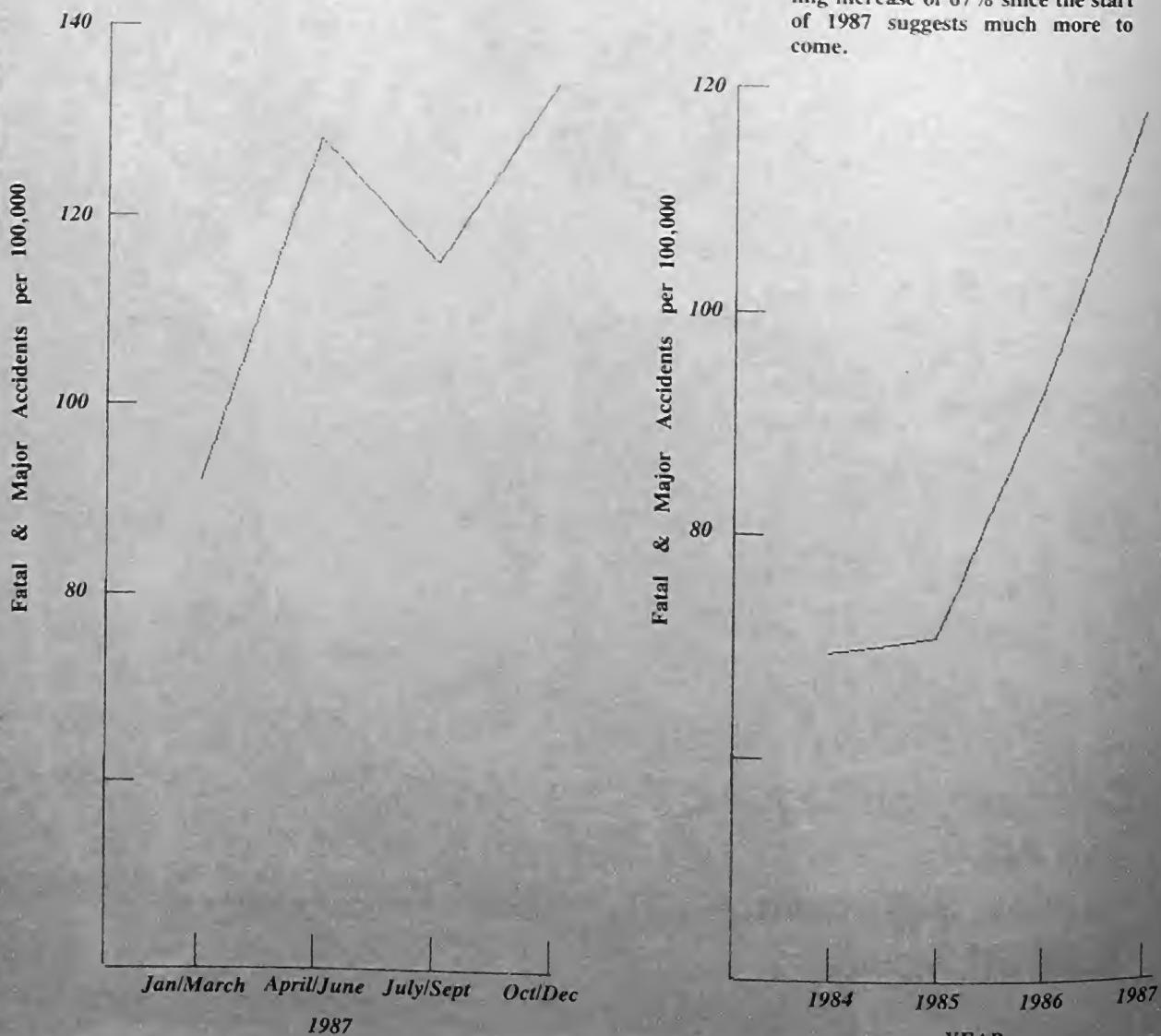
THE government likes to pretend that its slave labour schemes are to 'train' the unemployed; that they really exist for our benefit. We say this is untrue, indeed we say such schemes are criminal. Our graphs illustrate the rate of fatal and major accidents on the Youth Training Scheme since 1984 and they show that if you walk into one, there's a growing chance that you won't walk away from it again.

Nobody is being trained on these things – they just exist for cheap labour. The 'trainees' are considered expendable. Those that are killed or maimed on these schemes are no loss; after all, there's still plenty more on the dole queues, isn't there?

The bosses and their system just consider us as cannon fodder, to be squeezed dry and thrown back onto the scrap heap. The figures show just how many young people on YTS have been maimed and murdered in the interest of the bosses' profits. There has been a startling increase of 67% in these accidents since the start of 1987 – it is undoubtedly higher now.

When the 'Workfare' Educational Training Programme is introduced, we will undoubtedly see a further increase in the numbers of deaths and injuries. That is one reason why it must be resisted and smashed, along with all the government's slave labour schemes. No more 'trainees' must die for the bosses' profits.

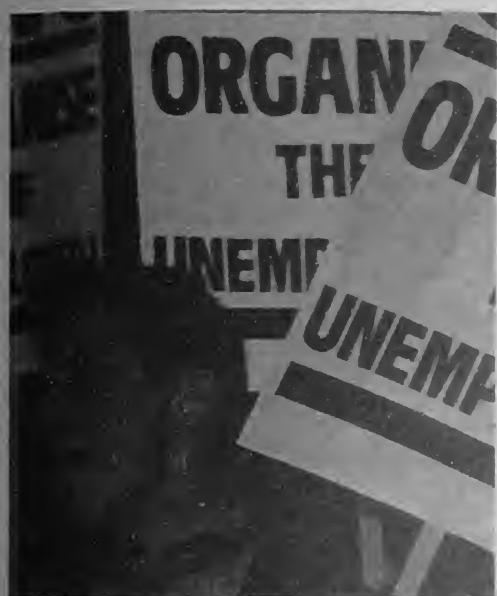
Fatal and major injuries have rocketed since 1984. But the startling increase of 67% since the start of 1987 suggests much more to come.



Smash All Slave Labour Schemes!

THE trade union leaderships backed the slave labour schemes of the Wilson/Callaghan Labour government, it backed the Tories YTS and now it is backing their Employment Training Programme.

The unemployed have got nothing to thank the leaders of the TUC for. TUC secretary, Norman Willis, has often said that to boycott these schemes would be to "abandon" the unemployed. Few people who have ever been on a government 'training' scheme would object to being 'abandoned' in this way.



•Fightback ...

With the negotiations between the government and the TUC to introduce the new ETP this September, the TUC had agreed to work with the scheme for a poxy £5 on top of each 'trainees' benefit, for a whole weeks work. For unemployed workers to refuse this would mean a 40% cut in benefit – this, the TUC agreed, was 'voluntary'. Yes, of course – you can choose to work, or you can choose to

starve.

In doing this, the TUC has also undermined the living standards, job security and rights of its own members.

After all, if you are a boss, and you have a choice of employing a trade unionist who demands the trade union rate for the job, and an unemployed 'trainee' who only gets benefit, which one are you going to take on?

So the TUC's collaboration with the slave labour schemes has not just stabbed unemployed workers in the back. And one figure that has been floated for ETP is that it will include two million unemployed workers within three years. Just imagine the effect that this will have on nine million trade unionists!

Until recently, or so it seems, the majority

of the electricians' union, EETPU, lead by the scab Eric Hammond, may tilt the balance against the ETP slave labour scheme. This would be a step forward. A boycott of ETP would make it unworkable. Unemployed workers cannot be forced into workplaces at the level of their dole if the workers there are already organised against it, demanding that workers be taken on at the full trade union rate.

But we cannot place our faith in the leaders of the TUC, even if they do decide to withdraw from cooperation with ETP; their hands are too dirty. For over ten years, it has not bothered them to work with such schemes. Of course, it is a step forward if the ETP is formally boycotted. Workers could then demand



•... with the UWC

The frontline for this is where it will bite, not in the trade union HQs, but at the grass roots – in the workplaces; in the factories, offices and hospitals. For the UWC this is where the resistance to ETP must be based. Workers here should be prepared to strike against ETP, and demand that their union support them.

Of course, the unemployed will not stand by passively, waiting to see what the outcome of this struggle is. They will through the UWC organise against the attacks on them, alongside the employed. Through this victory against the ETP will be assured.

The government has been able to defeat other sections of the working class, such as the miners and the printers, because it has been able to isolate them from other sections of the working class.

We can overcome this by uniting against ETP 'Workfare', an attack on all workers. Demand that the TUC boycott ETP, and organise against it yourselves, whatever the outcome of the TUC congress in September.

Make your voice heard on this with the UWC's lobby of the TUC on September 5.

of unions were quite happy to sell the unemployed down the river. Any real concern that was shown came from rank and file trade unionists, often with their leadership's resistance.

Perhaps with ETP the Tories have gone too far. TUC support has been very reluctant. For many union leaders, such as those of the TGWU, Nalgo and Nupe, the ETP 'Workfare' scheme has been too much to stomach, and they have come out in favour of a boycott of it. Even traditionally right-wing unions like the GMB only feel they can give ETP "conditional" support, to be reviewed after three months.

This, combined with the probable expulsion

support from their union for actions which were previously isolated and unofficial. Such a decision would lay the basis for national action against the slave labour labour schemes.

But the initiative must come from ordinary workers, both employed and unemployed. Given their past record, you can almost guarantee that the TUC leaders will just leave such a declaration as a piece of paper, which has no bearing on the real world.

So we must start to organise now against ETP. Whether or not the TUC leaders decide to boycott it at the TUC congress this September, the Tories will still try and force the ETP through.

Into Action

ON June 15, UWC supporters took part in a demonstration against ETP 'Workfare' in Sheffield. This demo underlined the great potential for a mass campaign against the Tories' attacks. Over 1,500 Community Programme workers (which will be absorbed by the Tories' new Employment Training Scheme) and trade unionists, mostly from the North West and Yorkshire, marched to the Manpower Services Commission headquarters. Speakers from the organising committee and the TGWU slammed the ETP as a cheap labour scheme and pointed to the experience of the USA to prove their point.

After the speeches ended however, a section of the crowd, mostly made up of Community Programme workers from Liverpool, held a peaceful sit down protest in the forecourt of the MSC building itself. The police moved in and brutally arrested Richard Alpin. Alpin, who apparently had simply made a clenched fist 'solidarity' gesture – a frequent sight on any demonstration – was lifted by the police and subsequently charged with assault on a police constable.

Michael Casey and Kevin Duffy were also dragged away by the police, because, it seems, they just happened to be standing in the wrong place at the wrong time.

With this unprovoked attack, these young workers just blew up.

A few police officers were given an object lesson in the fighting spirit of the Liverpool CP workers – and probably still have the cuts and bruises to prove it. The police responded indiscriminately, and simply arrested the nearest people to them with Liverpudlian accents. Paul Williamson was hauled off on this pretext and was later charged with causing actual bodily harm.

For a period it looked as though the situation could explode and Sheffield's scum in blue could have had a full scale riot on their hands. Altogether, five men were arrested and at the end of the day, the police got away with their attacks on the Liverpool CP workers.

Karen Meek, a member of the Community Programmes Branch of TGWU, sent a letter describing the day's events to *TGWU News*. This official union journal declined to print the letter and it eventually saw the light of day in *Newsline* (July 5). Karen sums up well the anger and determination to fight that was displayed on that dramatic day:

"The five arrested men have been portrayed as thugs, vandals and drunken yobs. It depends from which side of the fence you are."

The Employment Training Scheme starts in September, and gone are the days when we could exercise a little wishy-washy liberalism and play devils advocate.

There are only two choices now; either to support Thatcher's scheme and condemn thousands of working class people to work for slave labour and line the pockets of the already fat rich, or to fight the scheme in any way we can.

We must make sure the scheme is a failure. Five men from Liverpool made it crystal clear what they believe.

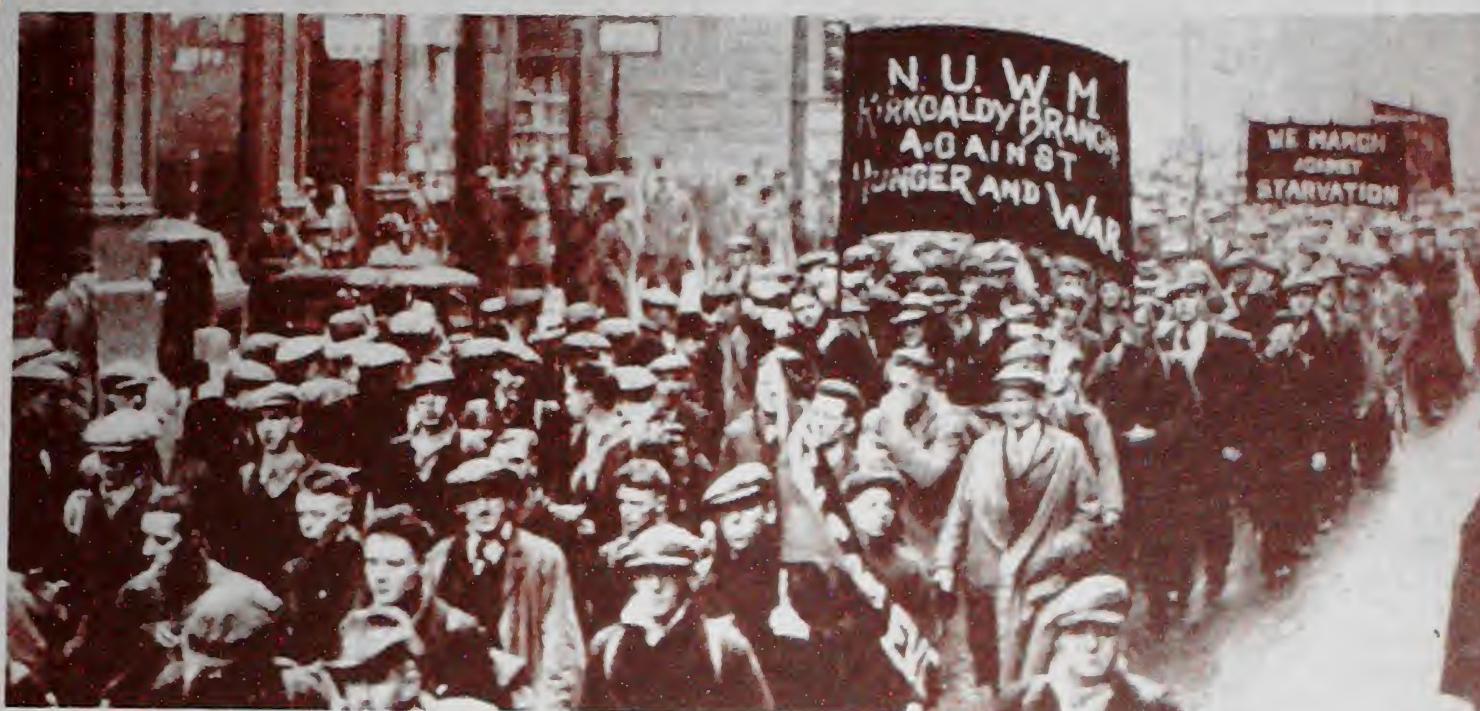
Thatcher can afford to laugh at us, at the fragmentation of the left and its disorder. Let's show her that in spite of our differences we have one common enemy – Tory legislation and rule."

The fighting spirit these brave young men and women showed on that day is wholeheartedly welcomed by the UWC. This type of spirit will be the bedrock of a mass, national, unemployed workers' organisation. We salute the Community Programme workers' brave stand and call on the workers' movement to take up the challenge they throw down – to unite in a fighting movement to beat the attacks of the ruling class on our class.



•The unemployed demonstrate their anger at 'Workfare'

Past Lessons



• The Tories have learnt the lessons of the past – so must we

One of the most frequent objections against the UWC is that it is a waste of time to organise the unemployed as the unemployed have no 'economic power'. After all, you can hardly go on strike, can you? What are you supposed to do – refuse to sign on every fortnight?

That's how the argument goes, anyway. This completely misses the point. History shows that *organisation* is the key. Without it we are powerless, with it everything is possible.

If there is one thing that proves the doom

mongers wrong it is the example of the National Unemployed Workers Movement of the '20s and '30s in Britain.

At its height the NUWM had one hundred thousand in its ranks. One of these was our honorary President, Jack Dash.

The NUWM was founded in 1921, under the leadership of Wal Hannington, and immediately pitched itself into a vigorous round of factory occupations in protest against layoffs and wage cuts, demonstrations, street meetings – in fact, all sorts of actions.

Its most outstanding actions were, of

course, the Hunger Marches. Six of these were held between 1922 and 1936, with contingents focusing in on London from as far afield as Glasgow and South Wales. These were nothing like the 1936 Jarrow Crusade, which the bosses' press have publicised. Jarrow was a begging bowl affair, pleading for jobs. The NUWM's marches were far larger and militant; they demanded jobs – or else! Marchers frequently had to confront both bureaucratic obstruction and police violence to make it to their destination. Nothing, however, was allowed to stand in their way.

Unlike many middle class do gooder organisations which claim to work on our behalf, the NUWM – like the UWC – was not 'respectable'. Wal Hannington, for instance, served five terms in jail between 1922 and 1932 because of his willingness to stand up to the police in the fight for the rights of the unemployed.

As well as fighting for the rights of the unemployed, the NUWM was also very active in solidarity work with employed workers, such as during the miners' and General strikes of 1926, where the NUWM prevented the unemployed from being used as scab labour and, indeed, mobilised them as a valuable arm of working class militant organisation. The NUWM proved that the unemployed, when they are organised and fighting, are a powerful force.

We must build a new NUWM today. If it could be done in the 1920s then it can be done today – if anything it can be done better, as we have their experience to learn from. We can stand on their shoulders.

Those who are around today who want to plead for the rights of the unemployed, like the sickening 'Hands Across Britain' charity stunt, are on a hiding to nothing. We don't want pity or charity – the only way will get anywhere is by fighting. The Tories aren't strong on syrupy humanitarianism, they are fighting a class war. If we want to defeat them, then we must take up the cudgels of class war. The unemployed must show their strength, as they did sixty years ago in the NUWM.

Those who excuse doing nothing by saying that "things have changed" are just coping out. If we want things to change – in our favour – then we must learn the lessons of the NUWM.

Battle Plan

AS THE TUC Congress looms, the 'battle plan' for the lobby is well in hand:

- The Lobby is taking place from 8.30am, on September 5, the first day of the TUC Congress in Bournemouth and the day ETP is launched. The venue is the International Centre, Exeter Rd, Bournemouth BH2 5BH. There are coaches coming down from London (see below), and places are free for the unemployed. £5 employed. Be there! Phone or write for details
- We have a send off rally/concert for the Bournemouth lobbiers in London, at Culross Hall, Battlebridge Rd, N1 (behind Kings Cross station). It starts at 7.30 on Sunday, September 4, with music, comedy and refreshments.



• Jack Dash

• There is a fringe meeting after the Lobby at the Tralee Hotel, West Hill Rd, Bournemouth from 12 noon on the same day. Speakers already confirmed include veteran dockers' leader and NUWM activist, our honorary president Jack Dash, and Jeremy Corbyn MP.

What you can do:

- Obviously, be there on the day. Transport is confirmed from London, and we're hoping to have coaches from Scotland, Wales, the North West and North East. Get in touch for details, and if there is no transport from your

area, then organise it for yourself. Local trade unions, unemployed workers' centres and other organisations of the workers movement should be approached for support. If you are a member of a party, a trade union or any such organisation, then get it to sponsor the Lobby! Among others, we already have the support of Camden Unemployed Action Centre, Hackney NUT, Brent NALGO, Inner London West CPSA, Catford CPSA, Herts Association of Trades Councils, Moss Side People's Centre, ACTSS 9/214 in Sheffield and Westminster DOE/DTP CPSA branch



• Jeremy Corbyn

• Take orders of *Unemployed Organiser* to sell and build support from the fightback. There are also petitions to the lobby you can get hold of. We want as many as possible to hand in to the TUC on the day. 'Notables' who have signed already include Tony Benn, Billy Bragg and Ismail Ayob, Nelson Mandela's lawyer. We still have many more to get though.

• For those of you in, or within spitting distance of, London, there are weekly organising meetings in Camden Unemployed Action Centre, 102, St Pancras Way, NW1 every Wednesday at 7.30pm.

The UWC is working flat out during this period. Whether you're unemployed or employed, we need your help now. If you want a real fightback against the Tories' attacks on the unemployed, join the UWC – join our Lobby! Write to UWC, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX, or ring (01) 431 3135. We look forward to hearing from you!

What Next?

WHAT happens after the UWC Lobby of the TUC? Do we sit back and see if the fat-cat leaders take up our demands to boycott the ETP? We would be foolish indeed if we had any faith in Norman Willis and Co. They'll never be militant class fighters.

No, the UWC has always said that if ordinary unemployed and employed workers want to fight back, then we will have to rely on ourselves. Of course, we must demand that these misleaders of our class stop stabbing the unemployed in the back. But we can never rely on the TUC to organise our fightback.

If sufficient pressure is exerted on the TUC it is quite possible that it will vote for a boycott of ETP at its September congress. For the TUC tops this will be the end of it. For the UWC it will merely be a step forward in our campaign to make ETP unworkable.

The UWC is calling upon all workers to boycott ETP, whatever the TUC decides in September. In line with this we are planning a week day national demonstration against ETP and calling upon trade unionists not only to join us but to show their solidarity by taking strike action.

The larger this demonstration, the greater will be its impact. It will also be a big lift to all workers, employed and unemployed, who want to fightback against the Tories.

Back in the 1920s and '30s such demonstrations would bring hundreds of thousands out onto the streets. Though we don't have the sort of organisation that can guarantee this, it is what we need. And the way we get it is through action, around a militant platform. The size and militancy of the movement then

can be reborn – but only if we all fight for it.

If you're unemployed, don't just be there on the day; organise others – use *Unemployed Organiser* to take the arguments to more people, to show them that things can be changed if they fight back.

If you're employed, you should not only support the demo, and pass resolutions backing it in your union branch: you should organise to get your workmates there. You should strike against 'Workfare' on the day. It is far from impossible to achieve this. After all, ETP threatens all workers, not just the ones with UB40s in their back pockets. So employed workers – especially sections such as GMB members, TGWU Community Programme stewards and all workers involved in any of the MSC schemes – should make that link through action on the day by coming out on strike and being on the demonstration.

To some this may seem to be ambitious. But to the UWC it is the only realistic perspective. It is the only way to smash ETP and all other attacks on our rights.

The time to fightback is now. Don't wait for things to get better by themselves, because they won't. Only we can change things, by fighting.

None of us can afford to place faith in far off promises of waiting for the next election. We need action now, not parliamentary bluster.

After the UWC Lobby on September 5, we will set the date for the Work not Workfare demonstration. If you want to defend your rights and living standards and build for that day get in touch and fight back with the UWC!